

11
STUDIES AND DOCUMENTS ON THE WAR

1815-1915

FROM THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA
TO THE WAR OF 1914

by

Ch. SEIGNOBOS

Professor in the University of Paris

Translated by

P. E. MATHESON

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1815-1915

FROM THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA TO THE WAR OF 1914

1815-1915. — 1815, the year of the settlement which after the great wars of the Empire restored the balance that the domination of Napoleon I had overthrown; 1915, the year of the settlement which, when the great European war is ended, will deliver Europe from the preponderance of Germany — the parallel is one which has forced itself on the minds of all. It is made still more striking by the date of the treaties which put an end to the domination of Louis XIV in Europe. Such comparisons of dates, indeed, like prophecies, will not bear very close examination; the treaties of Utrecht and of Rastatt belong to 1713 and 1714, the last document of the Congress of Vienna is dated June 9th, 1815 and its centenary has been reached before the date of the third settlement. But the correspondence of dates, imperfect as it is, satisfies the mysticism of numbers which has exercised a spell over mankind ever since Pythagoras. We like to think that three times in succession, at a century's interval, the mysterious rhythm of time has brought round the great settlement of Europe. I therefore appeal to the centenary of the Congress of Vienna as my excuse for explaining what was the nature of the settlement of 1815, how the balance of power it established was destroyed and the reason why the system which took its place has collapsed and imposed on Europe the task of a new settlement.

I

THE WORK OF THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA

The principle of the Balance of Power. — In 1815 the Empire of Napoleon was bankrupt, and the settlement of 1815 was the winding-up of its affairs : its task was to distribute the territories taken from the French Empire and its two allies the King of Denmark and the King of Saxony and Grand Duke of Warsaw. The victors — England, Russia, Austria and Prussia — settling on their own authority all the points on which they were agreed, had already by a secret treaty (May 30th, 1814) settled the claims of Austria and England, restored the smaller States of Germany and Italy, and created the Kingdom of the Netherlands. To settle the points in dispute they summoned a “ General Congress ” at Vienna, the capital of Austria, whose support in 1813 had ensured the success of the Allies. All the Christian States of Europe were represented because all had been engaged in the war. The sessions began on October 1st, 1814.

The Congress of Vienna was the largest gathering of sovereigns and diplomatists ever seen in Europe. We know from confidential documents what its underground workings were, and the spectacle is not a pleasant one. The police reports of a spy in high society (1) shew us how Metternich and the Czar competed with one another for the favour of women of fashion. The letters of Talleyrand to Louis XVIII introduce us to a labyrinth of intrigues, schemes and quarrels; we see one of the two representatives of the King of Prussia, Wilhelm von Humboldt, a Prussian of distinction in the intellectual world, at the moment when Talleyrand proposed to declare the Congress open in the name of public law, indignantly exclaim (a century before the declaration of

1. The *Revue de Paris* published long extracts from this in 1912.

Bethmann-Hollweg in the Reichstag which formulates Prussian international morality) : " What have we to do with public law ? " The public law which Talleyrand championed was indeed only the law recognised by Kings. It was in the interest of the King of Saxony, whose spoils Prussia coveted, that Talleyrand invoked the principle of legitimacy, the hereditary rights of princes over their subjects.

The Kingdom of Saxony and Poland, given to the King of Saxony by Napoleon under the name of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, were both occupied by the Prussian and Russian armies. Alexander wanted to keep all Poland (except Galicia, already assigned to Austria). Prussia wanted to annex the whole Kingdom of Saxony in right of conquest, and proposed to remove the King to the other end of Germany, transferring him to the old ecclesiastical territories on the left bank of the Rhine now taken from France and vacant because they belonged to no legitimate dynasty. Austria and England opposed this, not on grounds of principle but from mutual jealousy, and with such violence that in January 1815, it looked as if the four Allies would break up into two hostile leagues. Finally an understanding was arrived at, but neither now nor in previous arrangements was there any thought of consulting the inhabitants of the territories concerned, or of paying any regard to their wishes or affinities. A " statistical commission " was appointed to consider the claims of Prussia, taking account of three things — extent of territory, revenues, and population. Its work was like that of an expert cutting up a landed estate into portions to divide it among the heirs. The portion of Prussia consisted of four separate pieces : Posen detached from Poland, a province torn from the Kingdom of Saxony, the ecclesiastical territories of Westphalia, and the Rhine Province. None of the four populations concerned was contented, the Poles parted from their country, the province of Saxony taken from its king, the Catholic population of Westphalia and the Rhine put under a Protestant ruler. The sovereigns dealt with one

another like large land-owners dividing lands, revenues and tenants among themselves. All they cared to know of their subjects was their numbers and their wealth. The valuations were based on the number of *souls*, a term borrowed from the language of the ecclesiastical registers, but implying no regard for men's feelings or wishes : souls were regarded merely as appendages to bodies.

The settlement of 1814-1815 then was the work solely of princes and their ministers, and the nations concerned took no part in it. In conformity with the 18th century spirit of "enlightened despotism" it was governed solely by "reasons of State", which included dynastic expediency, the interests of the governing classes, tradition, and theories founded on the Machiavellian principles of the 16th century, entirely unaffected by the feelings and ideas which had inspired the Revolutions in England, America and France.

It was a work of restoration, carried out in a moderate and conservative spirit. There was no attempt to bring back the Europe of 1789, to revive the aristocratic Republics (Venice, Genoa, the United Provinces) nor the Free Towns of Germany, nor even the Ecclesiastical States, notwithstanding the protests of the Pope. France was confined to her frontiers of 1792, but was allowed to have Savoy and the *enclaves* annexed since the Revolution. England retained her colonial conquests, and the Czar the territories he had acquired at the expense of his neighbours—the Grand Duchy of Finland, Bessarabia, and Poland, which he made into a Kingdom. The gains of Austria and Prussia were disguised under the name of "compensations". Austria in place of her old domains, Belgium and Western Germany, received Salzburg, the possessions of Venice on the Adriatic and the Lombard-Venetian Kingdom, so that henceforward her Empire formed a compact territory. Prussia in exchange for her share of a poor, depopulated and hostile Poland, received three rich German provinces, which carried her supremacy up to the frontiers of France. Belgium was

united to the Napoleonic Kingdom of Holland to form the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Switzerland had all her territories restored to her, while she retained her new constitution. Norway, was separated from Denmark and given to the King of Sweden.

This redistribution of Europe was the work of people who had genuinely suffered from war and sincerely wished to make its return impossible. In this point, but in this point alone, will it bear any resemblance to the settlement which is to follow the present war. For the politicians of that day, trained in the school of Machiavelli, had no faith in the efficacy of the law of nations, and based their peace solely on the calculus of forces. Their desire was that no State should be strong enough to be tempted into imposing its supremacy on the world. Even before Napoleon fell they had declared their intention of securing the peace of Europe "by restoring a proper *balance* of powers", and they then announced to the world, in the declaration of Decembert 1st, 1815, a "state of peace" founded on a "wise redistribution of forces".

They restored that "balance" among the Great Powers of Europe, which had for a century been regarded as the guarantee of European peace. Five Great Powers were in counterpoise with one another: England and France competing in the West, Austria and Prussia balanced against each other in the centre, and in the East a single Power, Russia, whose economic weakness was a set off against its enormous territory. The mass of central Europe remained divided into petty States, too weak to have an independent policy. In Germany some thirty Principalities and four Free Cities formed so many petty States, all quasi-sovereign, and united solely by the very loose tie of a Confederation, in which the Emperor of Austria and the Kings of Denmark, Prussia and the Netherlands were included in virtue of parts of their territories. Italy, with fewer divisions (eight States only, three of them very small), had no common

THE WORK OF THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA.

institutions and so remained, as Metternich wished, “ a geographical expression “. In Germany and Italy, Austria reserved her preeminence, but her privileged position was no menace to peace, for from her very nature as a purely dynastic State, a collection of nations without any inner bond of union, her policy was bound to be purely defensive.

The European Concert as a conservative force. — The balance of power thus restored was confirmed by a permanent agreement to guard against any disturbance of the peace by revolutionary France. The four other Powers had laid down this principle during the invasion of 1814 in a treaty of alliance in which they pledged themselves “ to concert the means best calculated to guarantee peace “. The return of Napoleon led them still further to define (March 25th, 1815) their undertaking “ to preserve against all attack the order of things so happily restored in Europe “. After the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo and the second invasion, the victors, by the treaty of November 20th, 1815, by way of military precaution, enforced new cessions of territory. To weaken the frontiers of France, she was deprived of Savoy, and, on the borders of Germany and of Belgium, lost several strips of her former territory (Landau, Sarrebruck and Sarrelouis, Philippeville and Marienbourg). A line of federal fortresses was built at her expense from Luxembourg to Ulm, and entrusted to German garrisons. In order to watch over the conquered nation the Allies made a common undertaking to hold “ meetings with the purpose of... devising measures... for maintaining the peace of Europe ”, they adopted as their express object the consolidation in France of the order of things “ founded on the maintenance of the royal authority and of the Charter ” and “ the perpetual exclusion... of Napoleon and his family ”.

These agreements concluded in Paris were not distinguished by the French public from the arrangements made at Vienna under the name of “ treaties of 1815 ”.

Thus the defensive work of the Congress of Vienna was completed at Paris : a work based on reasons of State, but wise in the main, with that dry and limited wisdom which belongs to diplomatists familiar with the hidden thoughts of princes and ignorant of national feelings. The structure was solidly built, resisting as it did for half a century attacks from many quarters. But it had two weak points. First, the mutual guarantee of territories was confined to the Christian States, which alone were represented in the Congress, and did not extend to Turkey in Europe, which was inhabited by four Christian nations under the supremacy of the Mohammedan Sultan. Secondly, the European concert was based solely on external relations between the governments concerned, it had no support either in national consent nor in any political morality common to Europe; it was therefore exposed to the risk of destruction from any internal change which might make cordial cooperation between the different governments impossible. It is only fair to Metternich to say that he wished to remedy these two weaknesses. At the Congress of Vienna he proposed the admission of the Sultan into the Mutual Assurance Society of the sovereigns; but the Czar regarded the Ottoman Empire as his own hunting-ground and refused to put it under the supervision of Europe. Metternich tried to persuade the Great Powers to complete their territorial settlement by a settlement of internal policy which should be common to all Europe. Alexander also tried to find some system of European unity. But their methods like their temperaments were irreconcilable.

Alexander, with a strong vein of Christian mysticism, dreamed of founding "the great European family", by a brotherly harmony among sovereigns united in one bond of Christian faith; but he would not exclude the peoples from this union. The scheme that he drew up, May 15th, 1815, attributes the successes of the "grand alliance" to the influence of public opinion over governments; he recognises

that " the spirit of the age " has given rise to " the tendency of nations....towards constitutionalism " and he expresses a wish that " the States from whose union the great European family is henceforward to be formed " should take account of national feelings in regulating institutions within each State. Alexander hoped to maintain the peace of Europe by uniting all sovereigns in a common sentiment of " brotherhood and affection " which should make all States adopt the same political system. This system, which he had demanded for France and which he set up in his own States of Finland and Poland, was constitutional monarchy, furnished with aristocratic representative assemblies, equally removed from the two dangerous extremes of absolutism and democracy. This ideal, at once conservative and liberal, he thought might be realised by formal treaty under a religious name, the " Holy Alliance ".

Metternich did indeed accept " the moral solidarity... of all the Powers... of the continent ", but only for the purpose of preserving the established order, for Europe was attacked by " the fever of Revolution ", and " one must not dream of reform amid the turmoil of passions ". He therefore proposed that the European Concert, created to maintain the external distribution of territories, should also be used to maintain within the different States the political system most opposed to Revolution, that employed by Austria herself, absolute monarchy, with secret and uncontrolled government. Insurance against danger from without should be extended to revolution from within. Princes should pledge themselves to support one another against their peoples; and if a people forced its sovereign to abolish absolute rule, the Great Powers should intervene by force to restore it. Under this system a common internal policy would be maintained by armed intervention from outside. Peace would no longer depend on an unstable equilibrium among various forces, but would be ensured by that perfect stability and complete immobility of the government which is the dream of every admi-

nistrator. This scheme seemed possible at a time when the majority of the peoples concerned consisted of dependent and ignorant peasants, far removed from all public life, destitute of political ideas and even of national sentiment. The working-class proletariat was not yet in existence and there were hardly any large towns. Political or national opposition could only find followers in the population of the capitales and in the educated middle-class (*bourgeoisie*), in what Metternich called "the restless classes.... state officials, men of letters, lawyers, and persons superintending public education"; bodies which were very small and defenceless when confronted with the powerful forces at the disposal of Governments. Police control was sufficient to make them inoffensive and in Austria there was no difficulty in dealing with them.

The hard and clear-cut system of Metternich prevailed over the generous but confused dream of Alexander. The sovereigns signed the "Holy Alliance" to please the Czar, but the principle on which they acted was that of *intervention*. They first took in hand the supervision of France, "the country least inclined to respect general peace". Their ministers at Paris kept watch over the constitutional monarchy, and gave advice to the King; they carefully followed the annual elections to the Chambers and when they were dissatisfied with them they made representations and demanded a change in the system of election. When the armies, at Naples and Madrid, forced the Kings to grant a constitution, they forcibly intervened: they sent an Austrian army against Naples in 1820, a French army against Spain in 1823, to restore absolute monarchy. Public opinion, which was ill informed, was unable to distinguish between the two contradictory systems: the "Holy Alliance", the liberal alliance of Alexander, came in for the curses that were really aimed at Metternich's system. the alliance of princes against peoples.

Alexander himself, circumvented by the supporters of

absolutism, finally rallied to the system of his rival, and Metternich achieved a public triumph when the Russian minister after the revolution at Naples in 1820, officially laid down in the name of his master the absolutist doctrine of intervention.

The first breaches in the system. — The sovereigns did not long succeed in applying Metternich's system. The European concert was soon disturbed, in the two regions which had been excluded from the settlement of 1815. In the Ottoman Empire the Christian Greeks rebelled in 1820 against the Mussulman Sultan who had been left outside the European family; their rebellion, stirred up by national feeling, was supported by the public opinion of Europe, which induced Governments to take sides with the rebels. The new Czar Nicholas I, absolutist but "orthodox", supported the Christian subjects against the "infidel" sovereign : to accomplish "Russia's mission" in the East, he marched his army on Constantinople and forced the Sultan to recognise the little kingdom of Greece which had parted from his Empire.

Then came the Revolution of 1830 in France, a constitutional struggle, which the people of Paris turned into a national revolution by resuming the tricolour flag and driving out the legitimist dynasty, which it never forgave for allowing itself to be restored by foreigners. Its example led to the national rebellion of Brabant against the Dutch King, from which emerged the Kingdom of Belgium; then the national rebellion of the Poles against the Russian Czar, which ended in the destruction of the Kingdom of Poland. The last fragment of the Polish State, the little aristocratic Republic of Cracow, disappeared in 1846, absorbed by Austria.

The contrast in internal government between the legitimist monarchies which had remained absolute and the monarchies of England and France which had become

parliamentary broke up the concert of the Great Powers; Europe was now divided into two hostile groups : in the West the two constitutional States, in the East three absolute monarchies.

The territorial settlement of 1815, however, remained almost unchanged. It did indeed give signs of falling to pieces in the whole of Central Europe during the Revolution of 1848 : in Italy, there were wars of nationality against Austria, and republican risings against the Pope and the Grand Duke of Tuscany; in Germany, civil war at Berlin and Vienna, a war of nationality in the Duchies against Denmark, republican risings in Saxony and Baden; in Hungary, " national " wars of Magyars against Germans, and of Serbians, Croats and Roumanians against Magyars. But the reaction of 1849 restored the whole structure in its completeness.

It still remained strong enough in 1854 to resist the blow dealt by Russia to the Ottoman Empire. England and France intervened with armed force to defend the Sultan; for the first time two of the Allies of 1814 made war on one another. The structure emerged from this trial with new strength, for the Congress of Paris put the integrity of the Ottoman Empire under the guarantee of the Powers and admitted the Sultan into " the family of Europe ", thus filling the gap left in the South-East of Europe in 1815.

The structure built at the Congress of Vienna remained standing in 1858, with only a few breaches in it.

II

THE COLLAPSE OF THE SYSTEM

The policy of Napoleon III. — The structure was destined to fall in twelve years, 1859-1871; its overthrow was due to three men, two of them ministers, Cavour in Italy, Bis-

marck in Germany, and one a sovereign, Napoleon III. They attacked the established order from different motives. Cavour and Bismarck were working for their masters the King of Sardinia and the King of Prussia, who were interested in creating a united Italy and a united Germany by uniting the other States of Italy and Germany under their supremacy. They were obliged to make war on Austria to drive her from Italy and Germany, and they needed the help or the connivance of Napoleon in thus tearing up the treaties of 1815. Napoleon was influenced by personal feelings : he hated with a personal hatred the treaties of 1815, which excluded him and his family from the throne of France (he publicly expressed his hatred in 1866 in his address at Auxerre). His rise to power, his title of Emperor, his name Napoleon III, which implied the reign of Napoleon II, were so many blows struck at the agreement made between the Allies in 1815 : the sovereigns had shut their eyes, from hatred of the democratic revolution, because they relied on him to bring the turbulent French nation to order ; but they did not admit him into " the family of Europe " ; and Nicholas I made him feel his position by refusing him the title of " brother ", to which the tradition of the Courts of Europe gave him a right. Napoleon loved Italy and hated Austria, against which he had fought during the insurrection of the Romagna in 1831, and which persecuted his Italian friends. He was eagerly anxious to destroy the treaties of 1815 and expel the Austrians from Italy. He hoped by that means to console French national pride, still suffering from the disasters of 1815, by a revival of the glories of Napoleon and the acquisition of new territories.

But Napoleon III had no illusions as to the actual strength of his army if he should have to face the coalition of 1814. He worked hard to break up the coalition, first by trying to divide the two great rival powers, England and Russia, in order to obtain an alliance which would serve him later against Austria. In these operations he was forced to con-

conceal his action from his diplomatic representatives and even from his ministers, whom he knew to be opposed to his schemes. He first drew closer to England, by helping her to defend against the Czar the Ottoman Empire, in which he took very little interest. He enjoyed some years' intimacy with the English royal family, and confided to Prince Albert, 1854, his designs against the treaties of 1815, but he received no encouragement from him and found England hostile to any policy involving war or territorial redistribution.

He turned towards Russia, and had a cordial interview with Alexander II at Stuttgart: proposals of alliance were exchanged between their ministers. But the Czar asked Napoleon for his help only in the East, for enterprises against Turkey with which England would have nothing to do: in the West he only offered him defensive support, to prevent a coalition against his dynasty. This was not enough to compensate for a rupture with England. Napoleon, in spite of the respect henceforward shewn him by the other sovereigns, had gained no support for his policy of action.

Italian Unity. — Thereupon he decided to act alone. He sent for Cavour (July 1858) and made a secret agreement with him at Plombières as to the means of making war on Austria. He was careful to wait till Austria, by diplomatic mistakes, had isolated herself in Europe, by appearing in the light of an aggressor. France immediately took her stand as defender of threatened Piedmont, and Napoleon, reassured against the danger of a coalition, began the Italian War of 1859. The object agreed on between France and Piedmont was to deprive Austria of all her Italian possessions. But after the conquest of Lombardy, and before Venetia was touched, Napoleon learnt that Prussia was arming: he did not venture to face a coalition of the two Germanic Powers and returned to France, leaving his Piedmontese allies disappointed and irritated.

A widespread legend represents Napoleon III as the cham-

pion of the principle of nationality, a Don Quixote fighting battle after battle in defence of oppressed peoples. Some have praised him for this, but the majority have blamed him for sacrificing the interests of France to the safety of foreign peoples; the result has been to create a prejudice in French opinion against the policy founded on respect for nationalities, which has been held responsible for the disasters of France. There is an element of truth in the legend. It is true that Napoleon took an interest in certain oppressed peoples, but he did not make war on their behalf. He interested himself in the Roumanians; when the Powers insisted on maintaining the separation of Moldavia and Wallachia, which had been given autonomy by the Congress of Paris, Napoleon gave personal instructions to support their union, to the great astonishment of the ambassador Thouvenel, who, having spent his career in the East, looked upon all the peoples under Turkey as so much "dung"!

He made offers to the Hungarian refugees in 1859, but to employ them for the war against Austria; Bismarck did the same in 1866. For the Poles, Napoleon was not able to do more in 1863 than take diplomatic measures demanded by French public opinion. For the Danes of Schleswig he did not risk war in 1864, and only obtained for them in 1866 belated verbal concession in the treaty of Prague. Of the five wars that he fought, not one, except the Italian, was in the interests of nationality. These facts help us to understand the behaviour of Napoleon in Italy after 1859. He had a sincere sympathy for the Italians, but his only concern with Italian *nationality* was to deliver Italy from the barbarians; he did not wish for Italian *unity*. What he wished to establish in Italy was a confederation of sovereign princes, analogous to that Germanic Confederation which the Germans rejected as incompatible with unity. This plan, which received official sanction by the treaty of Zurich, miscarried owing to the refusal of the princes. It was the Italians themselves who, under Cavour's direction, revolted and

expelled their legitimate princes, expressed their will by plebiscite, and by a series of annexations created the Kingdom of Italy.

Napoleon did not attempt to use force to prevent Italian unity, but took advantage of it to secure the cession of Savoy and Nice (1860). This acquisition, which belied his public promises in 1859, made all the sovereigns distrust him : it was in vain that he tried henceforward to resume cordial relations with them. He felt isolated and powerless.

Formation of the German Empire. — He gained new confidence from the conflict between Austria and Prussia for preponderance in Germany; he counted on a long war which would exhaust them both, when he would come forward as arbiter and make his own terms. That was why he helped Bismarck to conclude the alliance between Italy and Prussia, which decided King William to make war on Austria, the ally of the German States. His calculations were upset by the new Prussian method of warfare, a revival of that of Napoleon I, making use of rapid operations and a massed attack upon a surprised enemy to decide the fortune of war in one engagement. Sadowa, the news of which he heard with pleasure, was soon seen to be a disaster, for having neglected to keep an army in readiness, he was forced to be a powerless spectator of the manœuvres of victorious Prussia. He aggravated the evil by encouraging Prussia to annex a large part of the German States of the North, hoping in return for his compliance to get from her what Bismarck cynically called a *pourboire*. He first asked for German territory on the frontier of Lorraine, and then for Belgium; he would have been satisfied in 1867 with Luxembourg. But he got nothing. He ceased to speak of nationality, and officially put forward through a minister a theory on the natural tendency of peoples to form "large agglomerations", a theory threatening the existence of small States.

Prussia, supreme in Germany, united all the German

States, except the four States of the South, under a Federal Government, controlled by herself. The Emperor of Austria reconciled with the Hungarian nobles, divided his Empire into two States, one governed by the Germans of Vienna, the other (the Kingdom of Hungary) by the Magyar nobility.

Preparations for the "revenge for Sadowa" were discussed at Paris and Vienna in 1869, a short time before the candidature of a Hohenzollern for the throne of Spain caused the sudden outbreak of war between France and Prussia. Preliminary steps had been taken for an alliance, in the form of an exchange of letters between the three sovereigns of Austria, France and Italy. The Duc de Gramont, who became Minister of Foreign Affairs in May 1870, was aware of their negotiations, which he regarded as definite agreements full of and was therefore so confident, that not content with the rebuff to Prussia expressed in the withdrawal of the candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern, he wanted the King of Prussia officially to admit the rebuff. He thus provided Bismarck with his opportunity of replying by the "Ems telegram", of which the outcome was the war between France and the German States.

The war against France completed the unity of Germany under the supremacy of the King of Prussia, who now became "German Emperor". Such was the conclusion in 1871 of the European crisis, started by the Emperor of the French in 1859. Prussia, accomplishing in 1871 what her allies had prevented her from doing in 1815, drove France back beyond her frontiers of the 17th century, and tore from her Metz and Alsace, in defiance of the manifest wishes of the population.

Austria, driven out of Italy and Germany, Italy and Germany transformed into Great Powers, the Kingdom of Hungary elevated into a State, Denmark deprived of her Duchies, France of Alsace-Lorraine — all this meant that central Europe was turned upside down, and the structure raised by the Congress of Vienna was destroyed. It was

also the end of the European concert which guaranteed the balance of power in Europe. When Thiers, after the fall of the Empire, went in the name of invaded France to ask for the help of the Great Powers, Beust, the Austrian minister, replied to him : " I see no Europe left ". The treaties of 1815 disappeared in the storm unchained by their personal enemy Napoleon III, and with them disappeared men's confidence in international agreements, destroyed by the brutal methods and cynical declarations of Bismarck.

III

THE NEW SYSTEM AND THE WAR OF 1914

The preponderance of Germany. — The new structure was no longer, like that of 1815, framed by a general agreement between equal States to preserve peace by means of a Balance of Power; it rested on the preponderance of Germany, the strongest military Power, keeping the other Powers in awe, or binding them to her by separate agreements.

Nationalities were not much better treated than in 1815. Italians and Germans had obtained their national unity by accepting voluntarily in the one case, by submitting after defeat in the other, to the domination of the military States. Piedmont and Prussia, who had taken advantage of the sentiment of nationality to aggrandize their own power. The Hungarians had profited by the difficulties of the Emperor to re-establish an autonomous Kingdom. But the unity of Italy alone was based on the will of the peoples concerned and unstained by violence done to other nationalities. Prussia had annexed the Duchies and four German States without consulting their populations and certainly against the wishes of the inhabitants of Holstein, Hanover

and the Republic of Frankfurt, attempting to give an official justification to her action by an appeal to the barbarous custom of " the judgment of God ". In the " national " German Empire, Prussia did violence to the national sentiment of three peoples, the Poles of Posen, to whom she did not even keep the promise made in 1815 to leave them the use of their own language, the Danes of North Schleswig, whom she refused to consult in spite of the clause in the treaty of 1866, the peoples of Alsace-Lorraine, whom under the lying label of " Reichsland " (Imperial Territory) she kept under the discretionary power of the Government in Berlin. Arbitrary annexations were no novelty in Europe, but in Alsace-Lorraine Prussia made an unprecedented experiment : seizing a strip of territory on the frontier of another Great Power, she incorporated a population whose national sentiment, to which conquest had already done violence, was perpetually kept up by neighbourhood to their old mother-country and permanent ties with it. The creation of the Hungarian State, if it freed the Hungarian people from the German domination of Vienna, surrendered all the other nationalities of the Kingdom, Croats, Serbs, Slovaks, Roumanians, even Germans in Transylvania and the Banat, to the arbitrary will of the Magyar minority. The Magyar nobles who governed the " national " State of Hungary were to show much greater ardour in " Magyarizing " than the Germans of Austria had been in " Germanizing ". The Austrian monarchy remained, in both its halves, a challenge to the national sentiments of its subjects.

Across the whole breadth of Europe, from the Arctic Sea to the Archipelago, stretched a belt of small subject nationalities more or less ill-treated, all subject to foreign government, most of them ruled by officials, some even by an aristocracy, of another nation. Going from North to South, these nationalities were : Finland, the freest of all, in so far as the Czar left it its national autonomy; the Esthonian and Lettish peoples, subjected at the same time to a German

aristocracy and to Russian officials: the Lithuanian peoples divided between Russia and Prussia; the Polish people, dismembered by partition among the three Empires: the Czechs governed by Vienna and the Slovak branch of them subject to the Magyars; the Ruthenians, subject in Austria to the Polish nobility of Galicia, in Russia to a censorship which forbade them to publish anything in their own dialect; Croats and Slovenes, dependent partly on Vienna and partly on Buda-Pest; the Serbian people half vassals, half subjects of the Sultan; the Rumanians, divided between the Ottoman Empire and Hungary; the Bulgarian people, all of it still oppressed by the Turks; the Greek nationality, only a minority of whom enjoyed national independence. In 1871 as in 1815 Europe was everywhere ruled by the force of the governments, not by the will of the peoples.

This system, like that of 1815, was based on distrust of France, but it was dominated by the preponderance of Germany. Germany, which was strong enough to fill the part played by all the Allies combined in 1815, kept watch on republican France, which she suspected of a desire to retrieve her losses. She consolidated her position by agreements with other Powers, concluded under colour of preserving order, the *statu quo*, and peace. First came (from 1871 to 1873) the "entente" between the three Emperors, announced to the world by their visits to one another. The sovereigns, as in the time of Metternich, combined to take measures against the common enemy, the Revolution, social revolution as represented then by the "International association of working-men", "The International", already in its last agonies, but taken by ill-informed governments to be a fighting organisation.

When the personal rivalry between Bismarck and Gortschakof had loosened the ties with Russia, Germany drew into her alliance first Austria, whose policy she supported against Russia in the Balkans, and then Italy which was at enmity with France, where the Conservatives were talking

of restoring the power of the Pope and the Republicans were deciding on the occupation of Tunis. Russia, resuming her advance against the Ottoman Empire, which was weakened by the bankruptcy of 1875 and the deposition of two successive Sultans in 1876, brought her army as far as Constantinople; but, checked by the intervention of England, she was forced to refer the decision to the Concert of Europe. She emerged (1878) empty-handed from the Congress of Berlin, enraged against Bismarck, the "honest broker", who had tricked her.

The Triple Alliance of 1882 united the whole of central Europe under Germany's control; Bismarck supplemented it by a secret treaty of "re-insurance" with Russia, in 1884, which guaranteed to Germany the benevolent neutrality of her Eastern neighbour. Then, when the Bulgarians, freeing themselves from the guardianship of their liberators the Russians, reunited the two fragments into which they had been severed by the Congress of Berlin to form a single self-governing State, Bismarck seized the opportunity to maintain cordial relations with the Czar Alexander III by helping him to prevent the recognition by Europe of the new state of affairs in Bulgaria. All these alliances called themselves "defensive alliances" framed for the maintenance of peace.

The method of armed peace. — It was a peace such as the world had never seen, "armed peace", Prussian peace, as costly as war, a peace precarious and insecure, always hovering on the brink of war. The new method of war, calculated for rapid invasion, continued until the enemy is crushed, demanded an enormous number of effectives, always ready. The doctrine of irresistible superiority in the offensive compelled each State to be constantly preparing for the aggressive and to live under the perpetual menace of aggression. The Prussian Staff even in 1875, when France was reorganising the *cadres* of her army, had appeared to adopt the formidable principle of "preventive" aggression.

When a State suspects its neighbour of preparing war, it ought to anticipate it and to attack it in order to prevent it finishing its preparations. William I and Bismarck disavowed this doctrine, but their protestations were not sufficient to reassure Europe. In the day of slow wars, an interval separated the state of peace from the state of war; men waited to prepare war until it was there, and raised armies only when the time was come to use them. Now Europe was obliged to adopt the Prussian method, in order to resist Prussia. Except the States protected by their geographical position (England, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Norway) and Belgium, which relied on its neutrality guaranteed by treaty, every State required all its young men to pass through the active army and kept all able-bodied men liable to a summons to mobilise.

Every State, for fear of falling behind in its preparations went on increasing its armaments without ceasing; military expenditure grew rapidly. Wise persons said that financial ruin would check the nations in this mad race, just as in 1815 they foretold the inevitable bankruptcy of England, loaded with 800 million pounds of debt by the war. But the wiseacres did not estimate national resources at their true value. The burden of armaments has perhaps delayed the accumulation of wealth in Europe, but it has not stopped it. Germany under this system has rapidly increased her population, her commerce, her capital and her income; no large State has become impoverished.

Germany did not make use of her military power as her neighbours feared. Her preponderance was decided, but not bellicose. She threatened war but maintained peace. She did not seek either conquests or adventures. Her policy was summed up in two phrases of Bismarck: "The whole Eastern question is not worth the bones of one Pomeranian grenadier", therefore no invasion in the East. "Germany is satiated", therefore no more aggrandizement. The colonies, created from 1884 onward, were accepted by the

German Government only in the form of enterprises undertaken by companies under the protection of the Empire. The Germany of Bismarck, like the Austria of Metternich, content with the order she had established in Europe, remained motionless, watching France. Fafner, having won the *Rheingold*, withdrew into his cavern.

Germany maintained this attitude during the life-time of William I. But this conservative policy, confined within the limits of Europe, did not long satisfy William II. He soon came into conflict with Bismarck, and though it may be true that he dismissed him chiefly because he disapproved of his proposed *coup d'État* against universal suffrage, their disagreement on foreign policy was a contributory cause of the rupture. Bismarck wished to keep up the understanding with Russia, William preferred to draw the Austrian agreement closer. Alexander III, though he had a personal enmity with the Germans, had nevertheless given a cold reception to the advances of the French. He was reluctant to enter into relations with Republican ministers, in whom he did not find the guarantees of permanence and discretion which are necessary for negotiating an alliance. But finally, being reassured by the long duration of the ministry of 1890-1892, under the direction of men of distinguished bearing and moderate opinions (MM. Freycinet and Ribot) he consented to draw near to France, in compliance with the desire of his ministers of finance, who needed French capital for industrial undertakings and for the conversion of paper money.

The world-policy (Weltpolitik) of Germany. — The Franco-Russian alliance, by uniting two Great Powers hitherto isolated, in opposition to the Triple Alliance of the three Great Powers of central Europe, put an end to the exclusive preponderance of Germany, and led the way to the restoration of a system of relations in Europe based on the balance of forces. William II then inaugurated his "world-policy" (*Weltpolitik*); the phrase was grandiloquent, but the

idea wanting in clearness; the Emperor William, who has talked a great deal, has never taken the trouble to think with precision. The Germans have at different times, or even at the same time, given four interpretations of the phrase.

1st. The oldest explanation seems to have been that it was the duty of the imperial government, whether by subventions or by the intervention of its official representatives, to help Germans to extend their commerce throughout the world.

2nd. It was further urged that it was necessary to find an outlet for the population of Germany which was rapidly growing; instead of letting emigrants go to America where they were lost for Germany, the Government would direct them to unoccupied territories where they would form colonies of settlement (*colonies de peuplement*) under the direct control or under the influence of the Empire.

3rd. Later reflection suggested that Germany, with her colossal industry and highly developed agricultural system, had no longer any surplus population to send abroad, since she had actually to induce foreign labourers to come in. She must, therefore, look not for colonies, of settlement but for colonies to be exploited (*colonies d'exploitation*): these would be developed by German capitalists, engineers, planters and contractors, who would direct the labour of the native population. They would thus learn, in Delbrück's words, to become like the English "a nation of masters". But for this purpose vast territories were needed, and it was the duty of the Government to acquire them.

4th. Finally they went on to say that Germany, which had now become the greatest Power in the world, did not play a part in politics proportionate to her strength. Henceforward Germany must "have her say" on every question raised anywhere in the world; the Government must not allow any acquisition of territory, influence or economic advantages by another State to pass without claiming its share or some compensation.

All these ideas had one point in common: Germany must

abandon the policy of "satiation", she must no longer remain withdrawn in her own borders and confined to Europe; her activity must spread wide over all the earth.

Fafner emerged from his cavern and looked out upon the world. The sight that met his eyes was not a pleasing one. He saw the best places occupied, the best of all by the English and their colonies of settlement (*colonies de peuplement*), the rest by English, French, Dutch, Russians. The future appeared closed. Wide territories, occupied by the great peoples of the future, were all inhabited by a population which did not speak German. Within a century, the language of North America would be English, of South America Spanish and Portuguese, of Africa English and French, of Australasia English; Asia would speak Russian, English and Chinese: no continent would speak German. It was necessary to prepare for distant operations; the army made to win supremacy in Europe, was not enough. Germany constructed a navy. At first it was a commercial undertaking. "Trade follows the flag", it was said: the navy served to advertise German goods. Then it was asserted that the fleet was necessary to defend German colonies. Were these inconsiderable colonies worth so large an expenditure? In the end it was acknowledged that the navy, like the army, was an expression of German power, and that its object was to back up the diplomacy of Germany.

William II gave his *Weltpolitik* a wide range in every corner of the globe, where he thought an opening was to be found for German influence to penetrate, and particularly in those countries which he believed to be disorganized. He made preparations for the partition of China, but the national rising of the Chinese, in spite of the victory of the devastating "Huns" sent against them by Germany (William himself exhorted his soldiers to make the Huns their pattern) made him abandon the enterprise; there only remained the costly establishment at Tsing-Tau, which has just been taken.

from him by Japan. His next idea was to support the Boers in their war with England, in order to open a door to German influence in South Africa; but he soon thought better of this, and sent to England a plan of operations against the Boers prepared by his Staff. This did not add to his influence, either in Africa or Europe. He tried to get a footing in South America by sending his fleet to demand from Venezuela at the cannon's mouth the payment of German debts; but he was pulled up sharply by the United States which appealed to the Monroe doctrine. He wanted to open up Morocco to the trade and to the enterprises of Germany, and three times he announced this to France "with mailed fist". These three exhibitions of German power, at Tangiers 1905, Algeciras 1906, Agadir 1911, ended in the French Protectorate over Morocco. In Persia, before he had taken any steps, he was forestalled by the agreement between Russia and England. But the sphere of his particular choice was the Ottoman Empire. He extended his protection to the Sultan Abdul-Hamid who had massacred his subjects in Armenia, Crete and Macedonia, and thus obtained for the factories of Germany the privilege of providing material of war for the Turks, and for the German army that of educating Turkish officers. He got for a German company the concession for the great Bagdad railway, which was to open up to German goods, and it was even added to German colonists, the vast region of the Tigris and Euphrates. But "German Bagdad" did not get the French capital it hoped for. The Ottoman revolution of 1908, which put the Sultan under the guardianship of the Young Turks, and later the defeat of the Turks by the Balkan nations in 1912 endangered at once the influence and the enterprises of Germany. The *Weltpolitik* was reaping a harvest of defeats.

Meantime Germany was growing in strength more rapidly than ever, and she took more and more pride in her position: she was proud of her population, which had risen to 65 millions, proud of her wealth which was estimated at

12 000 to 14 000 million pounds, proud of the mechanical subordination of individuals to society, which she called "organisation", proud of the regular discipline of her army and police, of the attention paid to every detail of her railways, streets, ports and insurance-arrangements, of the technical perfection of her workshops and laboratories, which she took for the higher form of civilisation. And the more Germany found to admire in herself, the less did she succeed in the world. She overlooked the fact that "culture" is inward and individual possession, a product of mental experience and reflection, and that it is this which alone enables men to understand and to foresee the sentiments of others, and that no technical knowledge or social machinery can take its place. The more Germany advanced towards scientific perfection, the greater was the want of tact that she displayed. Her psychology was crude; it understood only motives only, fear and material interest, "sugar and whip", the methods of the lion tamer. Her threats only exasperated those she wanted to frighten, and her trickery roused distrust in those she sought to win; her display of force gave offence.

Bismarck had shewn more tact, because, though he was Prussian and therefore a barbarian in sensibility, he had also shared in the European culture which is based upon psychology: he knew "the psychological moment" and took account of "imponderables". But ever since Germany, for twenty years past, has closed her windows on Europe and contemplates nothing but herself, she has lost the faculty of insight into character; for German society, uniform and docile, does not afford those subjects of observation which make education in psychology possible. That is why all the appeals addressed to the world by the Germans to justify their conduct are so amazingly clumsy; the educated classes have shewn no greater intelligence than the rest, because they have ceased to possess humane culture.

England, uneasy at the rapid increase of the German navy,

gave up her "splendid isolation", and burying old rivalries, drew closer to France and then to Russia. The *Triple Entente* now stood confronting the Triple Alliance, which was weakened by the rivalry between Austria and Italy. The balance of forces among the Powers was re-established and the preponderance of Germany was at an end. This was seen in 1906 at the Conference of Algeciras, summoned at the express demand of Berlin; Germany found herself in isolation with Austria "her brilliant second". The instrument forged by Bismarck for the maintenance of German peace in Europe had been wrenched out of shape by the *Weltpolitik*. An intelligent Prussian, Professor H. Delbrück, in 1906 warned his countrymen of the danger of a policy of aggression, which would drag Germany, with no other ally but Austria, into a war with the Triple Entente in which she would be defeated. But German opinion still demanded exhibitions of German strength. Why did the greatest Power in Europe hold a position in the world so much below her dignity? It was because envious neighbours had framed a plot to "ring her in" and to bar all roads to her expansion; The "ring" must be broken. Megalomania passed into the madness of persecution.

Not only her foreign policy but also her internal constitution led to Germany's isolation. While other civilized States were developing in the direction of representative government, increasingly liberal and democratic, based on the will of the people and on national sentiment, the Prussian nobility, in control of the Court and of the army, and the Prussian bureaucracy, in control of government and administration, were guiding Germany back in the direction of bureaucratic and military monarchy; the Emperor William revived the manners and the language of the divine right of kings. The nobility insisted on keeping up in Prussia the division of electors into three classes, election by two stages, and public voting, provisional expedients of the reaction of 1849, which have now become absurdly unjust and

unreasonable. The Government persisted in trying to denationalise the Poles, the Danes of Schleswig, and the Alsatians, by persecution through the police, through administration and through the schools, by colonisation and even by expropriation. The only result has been to strengthen the national sentiment of the persecuted and to outrage by barbarous methods the opinion of the civilised world. Delbrück, in the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, has for a long time called repeated attention to the fact.

The War of 1914. — The antipathy between Germany and the other Powers was growing : any sincere European Concert became impossible. The Eastern question broke the peace. Germany was now interested in it not merely as the ally of Austria : her *Weltpolitik* regarded the Ottoman Empire as one of its spheres of activity ; one of the essential parts of the programme of economic expansion, the *Drauf nach Osten*, the “ thrust to the East ”, claimed for the Germanic Powers the control of the road between the Danube and Salonica, so that the Germanic supremacy might extend without a break over the whole centre of the historic continent, from Hamburg and Trieste to Bassorah and the Persian Gulf. Serbia blocked the way. Long submissive to the Court of Vienna she had since 1903 resumed under King Peter her political and economic independence and lived in perpetual hostility with Austria, which oppressed the Serbs of Bosnia, and with the Magyars, who persecuted the Serbs of Hungary. The Austrian government attributed the complaints of its Slav subjects to Serbian propaganda. It claimed to prove to the world the complicity of the Serbian government by getting false documents forged, which, when produced at the discussions connected with the famous trial at Agram in which Professor Friedjung was involved (1908-1909) covered the Austrian authorities with confusion. It was not a question of a genuine document, “ improved ” by a diplomatist, like the Ems telegram, but of bare-faced for-

geries, forgeries of a mediæval crudity ; a document, full of grammatical blunders, claiming to be written by a Serbian minister, a pretended account of the proceedings of a society of Serbian students, written on a page a yard long, because the forger had found this size convenient for photographing his forgery. When the minister von Aehrenthal, to earn the title of " the Austrian Bismarck ", procured the annexation of Bosnia to the Austrian monarchy in 1908, the breach with Serbia became irreparable. The Balkan Alliance, formed in spite of the Court of Vienna, and the victories of the Balkan States over the Turks in 1912, ruined the policy of Austria in the East. The extension of Serbian territory in 1915 barred Germany's road to Salonica, and blocked Austria's way to supremacy in the Balkans. Germany, foiled in her " world-policy ", Austria foiled in her conflict with Serbia, made common cause. The resolution to get rid of the Serbians arose in 1915 from their common disappointment. The crime of Sarajevo furnished the pretext, and the two Emperors with a light heart advanced to the catastrophe.

Into this war, which they wanted and prepared, the Germans brought technical perfection of material : their machine-guns, their armoured cars, their railway transport, their trenches, their aeroplanes, their submarines have from the first proved them to be masters in the art of military preparation. But they have also brought into the war their childish psychology, which makes them unable to foresee the behaviour of other men and the consequences of their own actions. They have been mistaken in their judgments on every people without exception, and grossly mistaken : they misjudged the Russians and the French, whose national unity and individual courage they failed to appreciate; the Belgians and the Serbians, whom they expected to hypnotise by terror : the English, Italians, Japanese, and Americans, whom they attempted to seduce; the Mahommedan peoples, whom they induced the Turk to summon to " the holy war ". The crimes of their generals and the insolent avowals of their

diplomats have forced Europe to convert into reality what was a chimæra of the German imagination — the “ encirclement ” of Germany, an encirclement military, economic and moral, which will stifle her at last.

IV

THE CONDITIONS OF A LASTING PEACE

What will be the next settlement of Europe? I will not attempt to trace its plan upon the map. To do so is an idle pastime until the armies have done their work, and it is a pastime which has its dangers, for anything a Frenchman publishes, though it is read without attention in France, is carefully scanned by our opponents. It is impossible to do more than lay down in outline the moral conditions of peace.

Peace will be demanded after this appalling war by the intense, unanimous and it may be imperious will of Europe : not merely the formal peace which will put an end to massacres and ruins and will restore the combatants to their normal life, but real and definitive peace, which will deliver the world from the race for armaments and from the perpetual nightmare of sudden war : peace which will give to the nations the security they need for their labour and freedom to employ their resources in the works of civilised life. Europe desires no longer to be an army always on guard, liable to the menaces of an attack which would become more and more formidable as explosives and air-ships arrive at higher perfection. She desires no longer to be forced to make herself half Prussian, in order to avoid being swallowed up by Prussia, and to be condemned to “ armed peace ” from fear of “ preventive war ”. The Prussian system has gone bankrupt; it never gave security and did not even prevent

war. A system is wanted which ensures complete security for Europe and delivers it from ruinous armaments.

On what foundation can it be established?

The next Congress will make its appeal not like Metternich to the legitimate rights of kings, nor like Bismarck to "the judgment of God". Our age has ceased to have faith in the divine right of kings, it will not worship Force, its religion is national sentiment. The nations have made advances since 1815 and even since 1866; they have grown in wealth, in education and in freedom; they have all become conscious of their nationality and most of them have acquired the right to political life and have grown accustomed to having their wishes taken into account. The Congress will not proceed, like the Congress of Vienna, by counting the number of souls: it will have to learn what those souls desire. Everywhere this war has had a national colour, and has awakened the claims even of nationalities not yet organised. By an unprecedented innovation the allied governments have regulated the treatment of their prisoners of war according to the nationality of the prisoner. It may be hoped therefore that the Congress will make it a rule, in the redistribution of territories, to respect national sentiment and the wishes of the population concerned. I do not pretend that it is easy, in that zone of Eastern Europe where the nationalities are intermingled and have no precise limits, to find solutions which shall be, I do not say satisfactory to all those interested, but merely equitable. At least we have a right to count on measures being taken to ensure that all, even minorities, shall have their language and their customs respected. As for France, whose public law is based upon the national will, France will reject any settlement which would expose her to the shame of seeing deputies in a French Chamber protesting against their inclusion, or to the criminal temptation of making a territory French by forcing its inhabitants to disappear.

Respect for international law diminishes the chances of

war but does not remove them, as long as nations remain hostile. Every permanent agreement between groups of men, as between individuals, demands a common morality, to furnish rules respected by all, and sanctions effective for all. In Europe, since the decay of the political ideal of the Middle Ages based on religious authority, no rule exists to control the relations between States. This international anarchy has its foundation in the very idea of sovereignty as defined in the 16th century by Bodin, "the *absolute* and perpetual power of a Republic". The characteristic of absolute power is that it recognises no rule or control superior to itself. Applied to internal government this principle leads to *absolute* monarchy, the arbitrary power of the sovereign over all his subjects : applied to the relations between States it ends in the moral anarchy erected into a doctrine by Machiavelli and confirmed by the usage of diplomacy. Between States there are no rights, no duties, no obligations; international rules are merely matters of expediency, which alter with national interests. A treaty is merely a record which states existing facts. Absolute monarchy and Machiavellism are only two varieties of the same absolutism. In the 19th century absolutism was driven from the field of internal government by national rebellions; it has entrenched itself in foreign policy and the ignorance of nations allows it to survive there, because they do not see the danger of it. This war has brought it into light. All other States make good the lack of international morality by usages of general morality; they respect peace and treaties out of regard for public opinion or from a feeling of humanity which makes them shrink from the awfulness of war. But Prussia has not these scruples and we know now for what purposes she employs her sovereignty.

As long as this superannuated idea of sovereignty survives in international relations, there will be no definitive peace. The menace of war will remain, so long as a statesman regards it as his duty as a patriot to prepare for an aggres-

sive war and as long as his country admires him if he succeeds. This feeling that the sovereignty of the State is absolute in relation to other States must be rooted out in the same way that the idea of the absolute sovereignty of the prince in relation to his subjects has already been rooted out. A revolution has to be made in international life, corresponding to the internal revolution which has established the representative system within individual States. Public opinion alone can effect it; this opinion is in advance of the diplomatists, it is already conscious that the nations of Europe have more common than they have conflicting interests, that it would be more advantageous for all to work in harmony than to destroy one another, it knows that peace is preferable to war. When the breath of public opinion finds its way into that hitherto closed world in which diplomatists live, it will blow to the winds the spirit of Machiavelli and of Bismarck, the spirit of trickery and violence.

But does not the surrender of an absolute power demand too great a sacrifice of self-esteem from those who govern? It is a sacrifice which may be hoped for in countries with a parliamentary system: statesmen accustomed to recognise powers above them — Parliament, the decision of majorities, the votes of electors — will not find it a great hardship to submit to international rules. But sovereigns of countries where government is personal, brought up from childhood to feel themselves superior beings, and to see in their peoples only the instrument of their greatness, accustomed to live in uniform, in the company of officers for whom war is the only honourable occupation, what would induce *them* to recognise the control of rules which draw their whole strength from the opinion of subjects who are their inferiors? What would induce them to give up enforcing respect for their sovereign will by the appeal to cannon, “the last argument of kings”? One of the worst evils of this system is the inclination for war which it creates in the governing class; we know it only too well, for we have just seen the most fearful

war of all time brought on by the decision of two sovereigns, neither of whom, certainly, is superior in intelligence to the average level of humanity.

It is certain that the defeat of the two aggressive Empires, by destroying the caste of Prussian officers, the police bureaucracy of Berlin, the Magyar Oligarchy of Buda-Pesth, will ruin personal government and military absolutism even in the opinions of their peoples, and will bring back the nations of Central Europe into the evolutionary process common to civilized States. It will then be easier to make their governments submit to the observance of an international morality. As for the Emperor of Russia, imbued with that pacific spirit which is the basis of the Russian character, he is ready to accept the rules which are necessary for peace: he proved it in 1899 by taking the initiative in a proposal for limitation of armaments which gave rise, at the two Hague Conferences, to the only practical attempts hitherto made to secure the avoidance of war. His victory, like the defeat of our enemies, will increase the chances of a permanent peace, provided that practical guarantees are taken against Prussia, who by her avowals, as well as by her conduct, has openly put herself outside international law.

Let governments recognise above them, if not positive institutions, at least the moral authority of international rules; let them respect agreements between States as private persons respect their engagements; let them accept the principle of mutual regulation of armaments; let them frankly submit their negotiations and their decisions to public opinion, with the help of official parliamentary committees; then, international institutions for peace will come of themselves.